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(54) Gaming machines

(57) A poker machine has a poker hand displayed on a video screen. Usually at random, a player is offered a chance to improve the hand first shown. He may either change the suit of a selected card or cards, while keeping the original value(s), or progressively alter the value, up or down, of a selected card or cards, keeping the original suit(s). Both types of change may occasionally be available.

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SPECIFICATION

Improvements relating to gaming machines

5 This invention relates to gaming machines. It is concerned with a derivation of poker and is designed to provide a "one-handed" game.

According to the present invention there is provided a gaming machine with a video screen and microprocessor control, the micro-processor being programmed to display a poker hand on the screen on the insertion of a coin or token or the debiting of a credit, and, if that hand has certain combinations of cards, to pay out a win, wherein there are means for altering the displayed hand by changing at least one selected card sequentially within its own suit or, while maintaining its value, switching it to another suit.

20 The combinations which generate wins will, be those which players normally aim for in a game of poker, such as pairs, straights, flushes and full houses, and the amount of the win will vary according to the probability of such a combination occurring.

25 In more detail, the machine, when enabled by the insertion of a stake, will "deal" five cards, which will be shown on the video screen.

30 If the hand is a winning one there will be a pay-out; if it is not, then the stake will be lost. A winning hand will be the combinations associated with poker, namely royal flush, straight flush, four of a kind, full house, flush, 35 straights, three of a kind, two pairs and a pair, and the pay-out will at least reflect the odds against such hands being dealt, even if it is not exactly in correspondence with such odds. Thus, a pair might just recover the original stake, while a full house would result in quite a substantial prize and a royal flush would give a "jackpot win".

Preferably on a random basis, the machine may allow the player to improve his hand, and by pressing control buttons selected cards in the hand displayed may then be changed. Conveniently, there will be five buttons corresponding to the five cards displayed in a row on the screen. They may be numbered from 50 left to right so that pressing button four will alter the fourth card from the left in the row displayed.

There are two modes of alteration. In one, just the suit of the card may be changed, its value remaining. For example, a nine of hearts 55 might be changed to a nine of clubs. The change may be made by pressing the associated button repeatedly to cycle the card through the four suits, or the button may be held depressed and released when the cycle 60 turns up the desired suit.

The other mode permits a "roll", in which a selected card is changed successively to the next card higher (or lower, if that option is 65 given) in the same suit. Thus, the three of

diamonds may progress through the four, five and six to become the seven of diamonds. The machine will generally put a limit on the extent of the roll.

70 The machine can be programmed to ensure that no cards are ever duplicated on the screen, and so a roll will, where necessary, 'jump' a card already displayed.

The machine may offer the player the 75 opportunity to change any cards in his hand, or it may limit it to a selected number only. On rare occasions, the machine might offer both modes together, and if a common set of buttons is normally used, it could be arranged 80 that changes in one mode would be available first and then changes in the other mode.

The player having adjusted his hand, the machine determines a win or loss as before.

85 CLAIMS

1. A gaming machine with a video screen and microprocessor control, the microprocessor being programmed to display a poker hand on the screen on the insertion of a coin or token or the debiting of a credit, and, if that hand has certain combinations of cards, to pay out a win, wherein there are means for altering the displayed hand by changing at least one selected card sequentially within its own suit or, while maintaining its value, switching it to another suit.

2. A machine as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the wins are related to the probability of the combinations occurring by random selection from a pack of cards.

3. A machine as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, wherein the altering means are enabled on a random basis.

4. A machine as claimed in Claim 1, 2 or 3 wherein the altering means comprise manual controls operable by the player so that he can select which card or cards is or are to be changed.

5. A machine as claimed in Claim 4, wherein the screen displays the cards in a row and the altering means comprises a corresponding row of buttons.

6. A machine as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the alteration is sequentially within a suit and the player can stop it at a selected card.

7. A machine as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5, wherein the alteration in progressive through the suits, enabling the player to stop at a selected one.

8. A machine as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the two types of alteration can both be available, to be carried out in sequence.

9. A machine as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein there are means limiting the extent of any alteration.

10. A gaming machine substantially as hereinbefore described.

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